

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 404 021

PS 025 023

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TITLE The Languages of Learning: How Children Talk, Write, Dance, Draw, and Sing Their Understanding of the World.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-8077-3305-9
PUB DATE 94
NOTE 186p.
AVAILABLE FROM Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027-6694 (cloth: ISBN-0-8077-3306-7, \$37; paper: ISBN-0-8077-3305-9, \$16.95).
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Research; *Cognitive Style; Epistemology; *Learning Processes; Males; Participatory Research; *Personal Narratives; Primary Education; *Student Behavior; Teacher Response; *Teacher Student Relationship

ABSTRACT

Noting children's natural proclivity to interpret language freely and use that potential to expand and develop as learners, this book offers a new approach to understanding how young children communicate their knowledge of the world and how that understanding can transform the educative process. The book also describes the process of conducting teacher research and what distinguishes that process from other kinds of educational research. Following a chapter presenting a model for teacher research, the first section of the book examines, through children's narratives and artwork, how even mundane classroom events can provide enormous insight. Chapters in this section explore how "sharing time" expanded the children's repertoire from true to fictional stories; how to make room for the many voices of a culturally diverse classroom; and the artistic learning styles of boys who are considered disruptive or underachieving. The second section of the book examines how children's stories about science contextualize their classroom experiences. Chapters in this section discuss how keeping science journals allowed the children to explore and refine their own thinking processes; how keeping a science journal helped one child in his struggle to understand the world of science; and the children's use of metaphors and analogy to develop sophisticated theories. The third section of the book describes the repercussions of integrating art into the curriculum. Chapters in this section introduce the potential of the art experience as a vehicle for learning, and explore more fully epistemology, the study of the nature of knowledge, as an important exercise furthered through the artistic process. A description of how a specific unit of study in science developed around the creative arts is also given. A concluding chapter offers reflection on the elements of classroom language. (HTH)